

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for inspecting a uniformity of pressure applied between a conditioner and a polishing pad on a chemical mechanical polisher, the method comprising the steps of:
placing a sheet of pressure sensitive material between the conditioner and the
5 polishing pad,
lowering the conditioner onto the sheet of pressure sensitive material,
applying a desired degree of pressure between the conditioner and the polishing
pad, thereby creating an impression in the sheet of pressure sensitive
material,
10 lifting the conditioner from the sheet of pressure sensitive material, and
inspecting the sheet of pressure sensitive material to determine the uniformity of
the pressure applied between the conditioner and the polishing pad.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of correcting sources of any non-uniformities detected in the pressure applied between the conditioner and the polishing pad.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of inspecting the sheet of pressure sensitive material comprises a visual inspection.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the impression indicates that a pressure threshold has been exceeded.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the impression exhibits varying degrees of a single characteristic of indication based upon varying degrees of pressure applied between the conditioner and the polishing pad.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the impression exhibits multiple characteristics of indication based upon varying degrees of pressure applied between the conditioner and the polishing pad.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the impression exhibits varying colors based upon varying degrees of pressure applied between the conditioner and the polish pad.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of inspecting the sheet of pressure sensitive material to determine the uniformity of the pressure applied between the conditioner and the polishing pad further comprises:
5 optically scanning and digitizing the impression on the sheet of pressure sensitive material, and
comparing the scanned and digitized impression to a database of scanned and digitized impressions.
9. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
optically scanning and digitizing the impression on the sheet of pressure sensitive material,
5 associating with the scanned and digitized impression data in regard to conditions of the chemical mechanical polisher at a time that the impression was created, and
storing the scanned and digitized impression and associated data in a database.
10. A method for inspecting a uniformity of pressure applied between a substrate effector and a polishing pad on a chemical mechanical polisher, the method comprising the steps of:
5 placing a sheet of pressure sensitive material between the substrate effector and the polishing pad,
lowering the substrate effector onto the sheet of pressure sensitive material,
applying a desired degree of pressure between the substrate effector and the polishing pad, thereby creating an impression in the sheet of pressure sensitive material,
10 lifting the substrate effector from the sheet of pressure sensitive material, and
inspecting the sheet of pressure sensitive material to determine the uniformity of the pressure applied between the substrate effector and the polishing pad.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of correcting sources of any non-uniformities detected in the pressure applied between the substrate effector and the polishing pad.
12. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of inspecting the sheet of pressure sensitive material comprises a visual inspection.
13. The method of claim 10, wherein the impression indicates that a pressure threshold has been exceeded.
14. The method of claim 10, wherein the impression exhibits varying degrees of a single characteristic of indication based upon varying degrees of pressure applied between the substrate effector and the polishing pad.
15. The method of claim 10, wherein the impression exhibits multiple characteristics of indication based upon varying degrees of pressure applied between the substrate effector and the polishing pad.
16. The method of claim 10, wherein the impression exhibits varying colors based upon varying degrees of pressure applied between the substrate effector and the polish pad.
17. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of inspecting the sheet of pressure sensitive material to determine the uniformity of the pressure applied between the substrate effector and the polishing pad further comprises:
optically scanning and digitizing the impression on the sheet of pressure sensitive
5 material, and
comparing the scanned and digitized impression to a database of scanned and digitized impressions.
18. The method of claim 10, further comprising the steps of:
optically scanning and digitizing the impression on the sheet of pressure sensitive material,

- 5 associating with the scanned and digitized impression data in regard to conditions
of the chemical mechanical polisher at a time that the impression was
created, and
storing the scanned and digitized impression and associated data in a database.
19. A method for inspecting a uniformity of pressure applied between a conditioner
and a polishing pad on a chemical mechanical polisher, the method comprising
the steps of:
placing a sheet of pressure sensitive material between the conditioner and the
5 polishing pad,
lowering the conditioner onto the sheet of pressure sensitive material,
applying a desired degree of pressure between the conditioner and the polishing
pad, thereby creating an impression in the sheet of pressure sensitive
material,
10 lifting the conditioner from the sheet of pressure sensitive material,
inspecting the sheet of pressure sensitive material to determine the uniformity of
the pressure applied between the conditioner and the polishing pad, by
optically scanning and digitizing the impression on the sheet of pressure
sensitive material, and
15 comparing the scanned and digitized impression to a database of scanned
and digitized impressions, and
correcting sources of any non-uniformities detected in the pressure applied
between the conditioner and the polishing pad.
20. The method of claim 19, further comprising the steps of:
associating with the scanned and digitized impression data in regard to conditions
of the chemical mechanical polisher at a time that the impression was
created, and
5 storing the scanned and digitized impression and associated data in the database.